



The Toni Times

News from the Office of
Assemblymember Toni Atkins
78th District—February 2013



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A NOTE FROM TONI

On January 10th Governor Jerry Brown released his proposed 2013-2014 state budget. This is the first step in a process which culminates on June 30th with the enactment of a final budget. Thanks to the people of California, who voted to end legislative gridlock by permitting a simple majority of the legislature to approve the budget, and a greatly improved financial outlook for the state, there should be no barriers to meeting that deadline. Governor Brown's proposal is a balanced plan that reflects the hard work the legislature and the governor have done to address the \$26.6 billion deficit California faced two years ago.

As the governor rightly said in his recent State of the State address, "California is back!"

For the first time in years, instead of facing the prospect of drastic cuts to critical education, health, and social services, I am hopeful we may be able to finally achieve fiscal stability. And while we will not be able to restore all of the cuts made in recent years, I applaud the Governor's prioritization of investments in education and healthcare, both of which are critical to the well-being of our state and its residents.

The Governor's budget recognizes the uncertainties we face – possible cuts from the federal government, a stalled economic recovery, and other difficult to predict factors – and reflects a fiscal constraint that my legislative colleagues and I will embrace.

Following are some of the highlights of the Governor's proposal:

- Following years of underfunding, per pupil spending in our public schools will increase. School districts with a higher share of students who are poor or who have learning challenges will receive additional financial support. Local flexibility and accountability is increased.

- Student costs at our colleges and universities will be stabilized through an infusion of additional funding. Community colleges, adult

and online education, so critical to maintaining our trained workforce, also receive additional support.

- Implementation of the Affordable Care Act and other health care priorities will require additional funding, as reflected in the Governor's proposal, but will ultimately result in health and financial security and well-being for thousands of Californians. The Governor's proposal also provides additional time for the implementation of the Coordinated Care Initiative adopted last year, ensuring a seamless transition of care for sick and needy Californians.

- Funding for local government programs such as public safety will be stabilized, based in part upon additional revenues approved by the voters through Proposition 30.

- The budget allocation for the state's High Speed Rail program continues to anticipate that the system will be extended to San Diego in its second phase, bringing economic activity, jobs, and improved transit to our area.

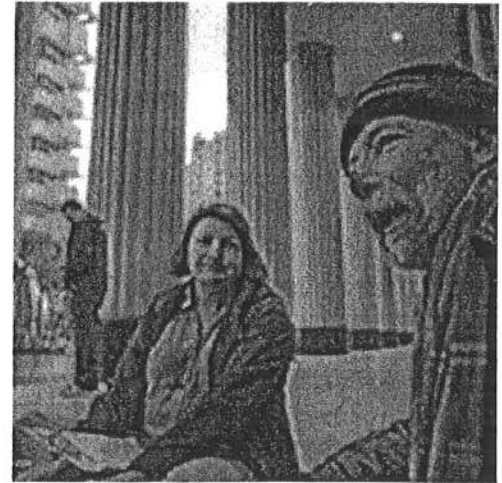
- Two new Veterans Homes in Redding and Fresno will improve the services available to those who have served in uniform, many of whom have ties to San Diego.

The state legislature will soon begin a series of budget hearings to discuss and refine the Governor's proposals and to establish its own financial priorities. The final budget must be sent to the Governor by June 15. Then Governor may then strike individual items from the budget if he chooses before the budget goes into effect July this year.

Warmly,

We All Count

Homeless individuals in our community are often invisible to us as we go about our daily lives. But on one day each year, community volunteers venture out in the pre-dawn hours to conduct a census of the homeless called WeAllCount, a program conducted by the San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless. This past January 25th, I joined a team of community leaders and elected officials who fanned out in downtown to count, and in some cases interview, those who were sleeping on the streets that night. Many thanks to my teammates, who included District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, County Supervisor Dave Roberts, Council President Todd Gloria, former Assemblymember Nathan Fletcher, and San Diego Housing Commission CEO Rick Gentry.



Assemblymember Atkins talks to a homeless San Diegan during the We All Count Homeless census this January

This is the third year of the past four that it was raining during the annual count and being outside even for a few hours in bad weather is a reminder of how difficult conditions are for those who have no shelter. Last year, WeAllCount identified a total of 9,800 homeless individuals in San Diego county, an 8.6% increase over the year before. More than half of those – 5,300 – were unsheltered. These data are given to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, which uses them to better understand homelessness nationally and to allocate funding for solutions. The numbers are also used locally to help identify unmet need. In depth interviews conducted with some of the homeless individuals counted during the census help identify the demographics of the homeless population, also very important information for making sure services are effectively tailored to the people who need them.

2013 data will be available to us later this Spring. As the recession eases and more affordable housing is built in San Diego, we hope to see a reduction in the number of homeless individuals. But we know that our job will not be done until no San Diegan is forced to sleep outdoors on a cold and rainy January night.

Help Bring Work To Warriors

The National Guard has its roots in colonial times, when citizen soldiers carried on their peacetime lives, but stood ready to put down their plows and pick up their muskets to defend their families and villages. Today, citizen-soldiers hold civilian jobs or attend college while maintaining their military training part-time, as members of the National Guard.



While the Guard originally focused on protecting local communities, it eventually grew into a force that complements the active duty Army when help is needed anywhere in the world. The biggest difference when compared to other branches of the military is that while Guard units are combat-trained and can be deployed overseas, they are also called upon when disaster or an emergency strikes here at home.

California has the largest and most-often deployed National Guard in the nation, including many who have been deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq multiple times. Despite their training, commitment, and sacrifice, too many members of the Guard cannot find a job when they return full-time to civilian life following a deployment.

To address this, California has created the Work for Warriors program, which matches the skills of unemployed and underemployed National Guard members with the hiring needs of California employers. In its first year, Work for Warriors helped reduce unemployment within the Guard by 25 percent. More than 100 California businesses and organizations are already on board with this program, including the California Chamber of Commerce, Dollar General, Granite Construction, Safeway, and Solar City.

If you are a California National Guard member, know someone who is, or if you are an employer who would like to partner with the California National Guard, you can find more information at <http://www.calguard.ca.gov/EIP> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CalGuardWorkforWarriors>.

Celebrate Women And Girls In Sports

February 6 is National Girls and Women in Sports Day (NGWSD.) Co-sponsored by a number of women's organizations, NGWSD is meant to focus on the accomplishments of women athletes and the increasing number of women involved in athletics since the passage of Title IX, the federal regulation that increased revenues for women's sports in schools. This year is the 41st anniversary of Title IX and women have come a long way in sports during the past four decades.

When Title IX was enacted, there were virtually no athletic scholarships for women. Today, female collegiate athletes represent over 40 percent of all varsity athletes. For the first time in Olympic history, every team participating in the London 2012 Olympic Games had women athletes. Women earned 58 medals to put the United States atop the medal count.

This year's NGWSD theme is "Girls in Sports – An Investment in the Future." This focuses on how participation in sports prepares girls for leadership roles in their future lives. Sports are a positive force in developing and promoting physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well-being for girls and women. Participation also builds self-esteem, communication skills, discipline and perseverance. These are all qualities that make a positive and significant difference in a person's quality of life and level of accomplishment.

On February 6, thousands of sports educators, coaches, athletic directors, recreation directors, students and parents will get together across the country to show their support of NGWSD and this year's theme. I hope you will join them and show your support for the female athletes in your life.



February 6 is
National Girls
and Women
in Sports Day



Representatives of the San Diego Unified School District recently met with Toni at her San Diego district office to discuss issues affecting public education. From left to right, Superintendent Bill Kowba, Central Elementary School Principal Cindy Marten, Assemblymember Atkins, Board of Trustees Member Kevin Beiser, SDUSD Chief of Staff Bernie Rhinerson, Language Academy teacher Scott Mullin, and President of the Board of Trustees Richard Barrera.

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Cash For College Workshops In Our Area

If you are a graduating high school senior or recent graduate, just got your GED, or have a potential college student in your family, the cost of college attendance is likely on your mind. The State of California has a special financial aid program for low income students called Cal Grants that can help with those costs.

Cal Grants are one of the smartest ways to get cash for college. For starters, it's money you don't have to pay back. If you meet academic, financial and eligibility requirements and submit two forms by the deadline, you may receive a Cal Grant! These grants provide up to \$12,192 per year toward tuition and fees, books, housing and other expenses at public and private colleges and universities and some private technical training schools.

Eligible students are California residents or California Dream Act non-citizens who meet academic and income requirements. Applicants must submit a federal financial aid form, called the FAFSA, or a Dream Act Application, plus their academic record. The deadline to maximize your opportunity to receive an award is March 2.

Sound like a lot of confusing paperwork? Well there is help for that, too. Cal Grant counselors will be holding FREE Cash for College workshops in our area to help you with completing the paperwork. And to make these workshops even more valuable, attendees are eligible for an additional \$1,000 cash award, just for attending a workshop, filling out a survey, and submitting a Cal Grant application.

In February, the following workshops will be held in our area:

February 9:

Sweetwater High School, National City
MiraCosta College, Oceanside

February 23:

Madison High School, San Diego
CSU San Marcos, San Marcos
El Cajon High School, El Cajon
Mar Vista High School, Chula Vista

For more information about these workshops, contact Linda Doughty at 858-569-1866 or ldoughty@ucsd.edu.



MY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEES

Committee on Agriculture
Committee on Health
Committee on Housing and
Community Development
Committee on Veterans
Affairs
Joint Legislative Audit
Committee



Majority Leader Atkins is presented the Clean Water Champion Award by staff of Clean Water Action California. The award, a glass mug made from recycled beverage containers, recognizes the Assemblymember's commitment to water quality and other environmental issues. Pictured, left to right, are Lori Chen, Legislative Coordinator; Andrew Grinberg, Program Coordinator; Assembly Majority Leader Toni Atkins; Andria Ventura, Environmental Health Organizer; and Jennifer Clary, Program Associate.



<http://asmdc.org/members/a78/>

Assemblymember Atkins joined State Senator Marty Block and Assemblymember Shirley Weber (to Toni's right) for the presentation of a \$25,000 check from Verizon to the San Diego LGBT Community Center in support of the Center's domestic violence prevention program. To Toni's left, from left to right are Laura Bennett, Verizon Government Affairs; Syrus Devers, Director, Verizon Government Affairs; and Dr. Amanda Quayle, Director of Behavioral Health Services at the Center.



Assemblymember Atkins met recently with California Energy Commissioner Andrew McAllister.

The CEC is the State of California's primary energy policy and planning agency.